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Overview of Major Changes to USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) 2006 Draft Proposal Guidelines

This document is intended to provide an overview of some of the major changes in USAID/OFDA's draft "Guidelines For Proposals and Reporting," released in October 2006. The current version is a working draft document. A final version will be released in December 2006.

These Guidelines differ substantially from the 2004 Guidelines. All applicants are strongly urged to read the 2006 Guidelines in full and modify proposal templates accordingly.

Applicants and partners are encouraged to provide feedback and comments on the utility of the current draft and suggestions for improvement. Please direct all comments to guidelinecomments@ofda.gov.

New Requirements:

- The 2006 Guidelines contain a detailed description of the sectors and sub-sectors, including cross-cutting themes, that USAID/OFDA funds. **All proposed activities must be presented within these required sectors. Applications containing sectors or sub-sectors not identified in the guidelines or linking sub-sectors to sectors outside this outline will not be reviewed.**
- The Additional Program Description Requirements (APDRs), outlined in Section VII, were formerly known as Minimum Technical Information Required (MTIRs). In order to facilitate the technical review of the proposal, applicants must answer each of the technical questions outlined for the sectors identified. **Applications that do not make an effort to address the APDRs will not be reviewed.**
- Each sectoral APDR contains a list of standard indicators against which all partners are required to monitor and report. Please include these indicators in the application, accompanied by baseline data where available or applicable. A summary table of APDR's is on page 18 while full descriptions are found on pages 33–100.
- Applicants are now required to include a Proposal Summary that does not exceed two pages. This summary will expedite USAID/OFDA's proposal review and funding process. See pages 9 and 10 for more information.
- A "Justification for Intervention" statement is required to explain **why** this project is necessary at this time and place.
- USAID/OFDA requests maps and GPS coordinates for all proposed water-related interventions. Where available, USAID/OFDA also appreciates maps and GPS coordinates for non-water related programs.
- USAID requires all applicants to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BSMP) with both solicited and unsolicited proposal submissions, even if a waiver is in place. Guidance for the preparation of the BSMP can be found on page 109 of the Draft Guidelines and online at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding/assistance.html>.
- Applicants are required to submit a Safety and Security plan with each proposal submission. Note: USAID/OFDA will not evaluate or approve the content of any security documentation. **Applications that do not include a Safety and Security plan will not be reviewed.**

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Significant Additions:

- The recommended proposal requirements and format have changed. The sample format is outlined on pages 10 and 11. USAID/OFDA strongly recommends that organizations follow this format in order to expedite the formal review and processing of any resulting award.
- The information required in proposals has been streamlined to reduce redundant requests for information.
- Information on proposed coordination and collaboration with other humanitarian responders, both in general and by sector, is strongly emphasized in the new Guidelines.
- Applicants must choose specific indicators from a standard list for each sub-sector. Applicants must use the standard indicators and may choose to provide additional indicators for each sub-sector.
- The 2006 Guidelines provide additional minimum requirements for monitoring plans.

Other Changes:

- USAID/OFDA no longer accepts “shared costs.” In this case, “shared costs” refer to budget line items that are attributed to the project as a whole and not to a specific objective. “Shared Costs” are not matching funds. “Shared costs” must be allocated to each objective based on estimated utilization. **Applications with cost proposals that include “shared costs” will not be reviewed. All costs must be attributed to specific line items.** For more information refer to the “Cost/Budget Guidelines” section on page 23.
- The “Programming Principles of Developmental Relief” section has been removed. All relevant principles are now incorporated into other sections.

Looking Ahead:

- The final “Guidelines for Proposals and Reporting” will be released in December 2006. This version will incorporate partner comments and suggestions and will include more guidance on indicators, additional details on BSMPs, and increased clarity on cost proposals.
- Subsequent Guideline releases will expand the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements and provide specific guidance on reporting.